

# Stress

No matter who you are, too much stress over a long period of time can be bad for your health. It can affect your mind, your body, and your behavior.

Your ability to cope with stress is influenced by how you look at it. Learn to take a positive attitude about stress. It is a first step to keeping it in check. When you see stress as a challenge that you can meet, it has less power to hurt you.

## Sources of Stress:

- Conflicts with spouse, partner, or children
- Worries or arguments about money
- Problems with aging parents, in-laws, or other relatives
- The arrival of a new child
- Difficulties at work
- Problems in society like terrorism, war, or disease
- Traumatic events like physical attacks or serious accidents

## Effects of Stress on the Mind:

### Short-term effects:

- Fatigue
- Anger
- Irritability
- Lack of concentration
- Feeling depressed

### Long-term effects:

- Burnout
- Chronic anxiety
- Clinical depression
- Sleep problems

## Effects of Stress on the Body:

### Short-term effects:

- Headaches
- Backaches
- Muscle tension
- Nausea
- Digestive problems
- Heart palpitations
- Dizziness

### Long-term effects:

- Ulcers
- High blood pressure
- Poor general health
- Low immunity to illness
- Diabetes
- Skin problems

## Effects of Stress on Your Behavior:

### Short-term Effects:

- Inactivity
- Eating too much or too little
- Poor work relationships
- Smoking
- Alcohol or drug use

### Long-term Effects:

- Relationship problems
- Family conflict
- Employment problems
- Isolation
- Thoughts of suicide or suicide attempts

*(more on back)*

Be Active // Be Healthy

## **Managing Stress:**

- Identify the source of the stress. For example, if someone upsets you, let them know in a calm way.
- Discuss your feelings. Talk to a friend, loved one, or counselor about your problems.
- Tackle one thing at a time. Break the source of the stress down into smaller parts that you can control.
- Eat healthy foods and get enough sleep.
- Limit your use of alcohol, caffeine, and nicotine.
- Increase your physical activity. Try taking a walk on your coffee break.
- Look for humor in your life. Read a book that makes you laugh or watch funny videos with a friend.
- Keep a positive outlook. Envision favorable results and make plans to achieve them.
- Make time for recreation. Try meditation, journaling, yoga, prayer, or exercise.
- Talk with your health care provider about other ways you can manage stress.

## **Resources:**

Pfizer Women's Health  
American Institute of Stress  
Medline Plus – Stress Page

[www.pfizerforwomen.com](http://www.pfizerforwomen.com)  
[www.stress.org](http://www.stress.org)  
[www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/stress.html](http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/stress.html)

### **For More Information:**

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